The Great Secret

Tales of love untellable

LOVE'S NOT GROWN IN GARDENS;
LOVE'S NOT SOLD AT MARKET.
HE WHO WANTS IT, KING OR COMMONER,
GIVES HIS HEAD AND TAKES IT.

STUDYING GREAT BOOKS MANY HAVE DIED.
NONE EVER BECOME LEARNED.
TWO LETTERS AND A HALF IN LOVE,
WHO STUDIES THEM IS LEARNING.

NARROW IS THE LANE OF LOVE.
TWO WILL NEVER FIT.
WHEN I WAS, THE LORD WAS NOT.
NOW HE IS; I AM NOT.

KABIR SAYS: CLOUDS OF LOVE
CAME ON ME SHOWERING;
SOAKED THE HEART,
GREENING THE INNER JUNGLE.

A HEART DRY OF LOVE;
RAM AGAIN UNTASTED.
THUS IS MAN IN THIS WORLD:
HIS ARISING WASTED.

ROUSED, ECSTATIC WITH HIS NAME,
LOVE-DRUNK, OVERFLOWING,
REVELLING IN HIS VISION.
WHY BOTHER WITH LIBERATION?

TALE OF LOVE, UNTELLABLE.

NOT A BIT'S EVER TOLD.
THE SWEETS OF A DUMB ONE --
HE ENJOYS... AND SMILES.

I look at you and am convinced of one thing, that you once had something -- some treasure, some symmetry, some secret, some key -- but you have lost it. Every moment, asleep or awake, you are always busy looking for something. It is quite possible you do not know exactly what you are searching for and that you are unaware of what you have lost, but I see the hunger in your eyes.

It is apparent in every beat of your heart.
This quest has been going on for countless lives.
Sometimes you call it the search for truth. But you have never known truth, so how can you lose it? And sometimes you call it the search for God. But your meeting with Him has never taken place, so how can you be separated from Him? You go in search to the temples, to the mosques, to Kashi and to Mecca; you knock on every door you come across in the hope you will find what you have lost. But as long as you do not know exactly what it is you have lost your search cannot be fulfilled. Your own experience will tell you the same thing -- you have knocked on many doors, but you have always returned empty-handed. The doors are not to be blamed for this. Before you set out in search you should know what it is you are looking for, what it is you have lost.
If an illness is incorrectly diagnosed how can you know the right medicine to take? Even if a doctor is here what good will he do? Nanak fell ill -- the illness was the same as yours -- and the people in his house sent for a physician. Whenever someone is ill we automatically send for a doctor; we don't understand there are some diseases that have nothing whatsoever to do with doctors. In any case the physician came, took hold of Nanak's wrist and started

to take his pulse. Nanak began to laugh. "There is no illness there," he said.

"You will discover nothing by taking my pulse. The illness is of the heart." The doctor had no idea what Nanak was talking about. Doctors have their own worlds and they diagnose illnesses by taking one's pulse. Nanak needed a master, a spiritual physician, and not a medical doctor.
The master is also a physician, not of the body but of the heart. And the master's first task is to make it clear to you what it is you are seeking. Then the search becomes very easy. When the diagnosis is correct it is not too difficult to find the proper medicine. Diagnosis is half the cure. But if the diagnosis is incorrect, then even vast quantities of medicine will be of no use to you.
What generally happens is that you become enamored of words. You begin to think, "Ah yes, this is what I have lost. It is God I have lost. It is freedom I have lost." Then you set out on your search. And it is wrong from the very beginning.
As I talk to you, I look into your hearts and I see that the throne within you is unoccupied. The throne is there, and someone must have sat on it at one time or another, but at present he is away, he is wandering somewhere else. Your heart is that throne; the king, love itself, has left it behind and has gone roaming in some far off place.
The search for love is possible; every child is born with love. Before you can search for something you have to lose it, and although every child is born with love it gets lost along the way, somewhere in the course of his upbringing.

Education, society and culture play important roles in this process. And because of this lost love a sort of vacuum, a sort of vacancy, a sort of emptiness is created within you. You are in search of that love -- not of God. You have never met God. But if you regain love then you are standing at

His door. You have never known God. He is unknown to you; you cannot search for Him. To search for someone, there must be some kind of relationship, some kind of acquaintance. And you have no such familiarity with God. Truth surrounds you. How will you find it? Truth is there already; the basic problem is that you have no vision. The sun is always shining but you are blind. What should a blind man seek? The sun or sight? if you have no sight, even if the sun is sitting next to you what will you do? You will not be able to see it; you will remain in darkness. Sight is needed. That sight is love. God is ever-present. He is all around you. But you have lost your vision; you have lost the means of experiencing Him.
Love is the ability to experience. Love is sensitivity. Love is the experience in which all your impurities are washed away and you throw open all your doors, all your gates. Then whosoever stands at your door is no longer an enemy or a friend but a beloved, and you open your door to him. When you begin to feel the whole world is yours, when you begin to see the beloved in whosoever comes to your door, when you no longer see strangers or enemies, when you begin to see only friends everywhere -- when this phenomenon takes place in you, know that you have found love.

And for the man who has found love what else remains to be found? The man who has found love has found the key to the door of God.
Understand the significance of love carefully. Nothing is greater than love, not even God. God is achieved through love, but love is not achieved through God. The presence of God does not guarantee love, but the presence of love will surely bring him to you. As Jesus has said, "Love is God."
The basic question, the fundamental problem, is seeking love. So let us clarify at the outset how love has been lost,

because the way to regain it will only be clear when we know and understand how it has been lost in the first place.
The road you take to find love is the same road on which you lost it. But you have to reverse your direction. You will have to turn around and walk the opposite way. The same ladder leads to heaven or to hell. One end is in hell and the other is in heaven.
You begin to lose love as you become more and more attached to material things. This is hell; this is the end of the ladder that is grounded in material things. But as love grows, God becomes manifest. And this is the other end of the ladder. This is where the other end is fixed. Love is a ladder, a path. If you abandon love you begin a downward journey; as you embrace it you begin an upward path.
If you ask me, I will tell you to forget God, to forget truth.

I will tell you to seek only love. All the rest will follow. Just as your shadow follows you, God follows love. But no matter how hard you seek, you will achieve nothing without love. This is because the seeker is dull and insensitive. He has neither the capacity nor the fitness for the search. He is asleep, unconscious. He is full of hatred, anger and hostility; he is submerged in the poison of malice. And only the nectar of love brings forth joy.
Every child is beautiful, lovely. And this is because he is born with love. But then, by and by, a disorder somehow occurs within him. Every child is so lovely; every child is so beautiful. Have you ever seen an ugly child?
The beauty of a child has nothing to do with his physical body, it comes from some inner strength. Within him, his lamp of love burns brightly and its rays emanate from every pore of his body, spreading their luster all around. Wherever he looks, he looks with love. But as he grows he begins to lose this love. And we help in that process.
We do not teach him how to love, we teach him how to

guard himself against it, how to be wary of it. We tell him that love is very risky, very dangerous. We teach him to be suspicious, to be full of doubt. We tell him it is necessary to be like this, that people will take advantage of him otherwise. We tell him there is much cheating, dishonesty and treachery in the world, that it is everywhere, and that unless he is on guard people will rob and cheat him.

We tell him there are thieves everywhere. We are totally unaware of the fact that God is everywhere, yet we never forget that robbers abound! And so we train children to be on their guard against thieves.
If you want to prepare children in this way, then you cannot teach them love -- because love is dangerous. Love means trust; love means faith; love means accepting -- and being suspicious is keeping a look-out so no one can steal from you; it is being on guard, remaining constantly alert, as if there could be an attack at any moment from any quarter. So, before any attack comes, you yourself become the aggressor. You see this as the best way of protecting yourself. We train our children to be like sentries. And this is how we do it.
When a child learns to behave in this fashion we say that now he has become mature. But by this time his capacity to love is completely lost. Now he begins to see enemies all around him; he looks on no one as a friend. And when he even begins to doubt his own father we say that he is now fit to enter the world. We say that he is now a child no longer and that no one will be able to cheat him.
Unfortunately, he will cheat others now.
Kabir has said to be ready to be cheated, but not to cheat. He says that you lose nothing when you are cheated, but that all is lost when you cheat others.
What does Kabir mean by "all"?
As you practice deception your ability to love diminishes.

How can you love someone you are deceiving? And if you are afraid of someone then the flower of love will not be able to bloom in you. It cannot happen because fear is poison. If you are full of fear how can you love? Has love ever been born out of fear? Only hatred is born out of fear; only hostility grows out of fear. And it is because of this fear that you begin to protect yourself.
As a child grows he becomes involved in protecting himself -- with money, with a house, with all sorts of things. He makes every possible arrangement to secure himself from attack, no matter from which quarter it might come. But in the midst of all these arrangements we forget that we are closing all our doors, that we are even barring the entry of love. Our protection may now be complete, but it is the same security as that of the grave.
A certain emperor once built himself a palace for his safety and protection. Emperors certainly live in greater fear than others -- they have such great material wealth, there are many threats against their lives. They have riches, power, authority; it may be stolen at any time -- and their fear is in proportion to their wealth. So, in the palace the emperor built, there was only one gate. There were no windows, no doors; there was no way for an enemy to gain entry.
The king of a nearby kingdom came especially to view the palace. He was very impressed; it was so safe and so well-guarded no enemy could possibly get in.

There was only one door, and that was guarded by a carefully selected squad of sentries who had been especially chosen in order of seniority. After all, can a sentry really be trusted? One might be tempted to kill the emperor in the night. So they had been hand-picked according to seniority, and each guard had to keep a keen eye on his junior. The other monarch was so impressed he said, "I shall also have such a palace built."
A beggar sitting by the side of the road overheard the two

rulers talking and began to laugh loudly. Quite startled, they turned to him. The beggar said, "Pardon me, but there is just one thing you have overlooked. I have been sitting here begging, and I have watched this palace being built. There is only one flaw, but it might prove costly one day. If you take my advice you will go inside and stay there; then you will remove this one door and replace it with a wall instead. Then there will be no flaw, and no danger whatsoever."
The emperor said, "You fool! I understand what you are saying, but I would be as good as dead inside there. The palace would be my tomb."
The beggar replied, "It has already become a tomb. The grave is always the last door to remain open."
We are all in the process of dying, and the degree to which we step up measures for our security is in direct proportion to the progress we make in digging our own graves.

The reason you look so lifeless is because you have made so many arrangements for your safety.
To be insecure is to be alive.
Life's MANTRA is to live in insecurity. And, of course, living like this there is no safety. A stone is safe and a flower lives in danger -- but a stone is dead and a flower is full of life! If a storm comes, the flower will fall but the stone will remain where it was. Mischievous children may come and pick the flower, but the stone will remain where it was. When the sun sets in the evening the flower will wither, but the stone will remain unaffected, will remain in its place. Would you prefer to be a stone simply because it is safe from such dangers? That is the condition you have chosen! You have become like stones. The flower is always in jeopardy. Love is a flower. And there is no greater flower, no more important flower in this world than love. There is also nothing that is in greater danger.
Love is life. Love means that your doors are open, that you

are standing beneath the open sky. There may be great danger being in such a position, but this is the essence of life. Exposed like this, two things can happen -- one, an enemy can attack you; two, a friend can come and embrace you. But if you protect yourself from the enemy you are also protecting yourself from the friend. If you build a wall around yourself it means you are building your own tomb.

You will always be uneasy in it; you will always feel you have lost something. You have not lost anything. It is just that the flower of your heart has not opened; it is just that you have not been able to love.
We prepare children to live so-called "safe" lives, and the result is that love starts to wither. Then we teach them to be dishonest, and love withers even more. Then we show them how to be egoists, and love dies. There is only one way to be full of love, to be loving, and that is to love oneself. And we teach our children to save themselves; we never teach them to lose themselves, to let themselves go. We tell them it is a question of one's name, of one's family, of one's community, of one's nation.
Once Mulla Nasruddin's eldest son ran away from home. The Mulla was very unhappy, but after a while he heard that his son had joined a theatrical company and had become a great actor. Now the Mulla began to praise him. After some time it was announced that the drama company was coming to the town where the Mulla lived. He bought a dozen first-class tickets and invited all his friends. He invited me as well. The Mulla wanted everyone to see what a great actor his son had become. He was very excited; it was a great occasion for him.
On the night of the play we all went to the theater. The play began, but by the time the first act was almost over there was still no sign of the Mulla's son.

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You are teaching your son politics; you are making him into a politician. And now throughout his life, come what may, he will always try to be first. But one day he will realize that he may have stood first, but that he has lost the real thing: he has lost the ability to love; he has lost the greatest thing in life.
A politician cannot love anyone. He has no friends. He cannot have any friends. Do you think Indira Gandhi can have a friend? How can one who has power and authority

have a friend? All who are near are enemies, awaiting her downfall, always ready to throw her out. That is why Indira Gandhi makes changes in her Cabinet so often. It is dangerous to keep a person in the same post too long because he will become too sure of himself. Being sure of his position, he will trip her up whenever he gets the chance and knock her down. This is the tactic used by everyone who has ever risen to the top. How can there be love in politics? Politics is full of hatred, conflict and competition. When you want your son to be competitive you are indirectly teaching him hatred, antagonism and hostility.

You also want your son to amass great wealth -- piles and piles of rupees. But don't you know that the lives of those who acquire great stacks of money are devoid of love? Their lives are empty of love. Those who have real love in their lives have so much genuine riches they are not crazy enough to pursue this other so-called wealth.

Try to understand this point clearly and carefully. Wealth is a substitute for love, and so you will never find love in the life of a miser. He is a miser because there is no love in him. His substitute for love is his wealth.

If love exists in your life then you know you have spread so much love around that those who have received it will care for you if some difficulty arises in the future. And if there is so much love in your life that it takes the form of prayer, then you know that God will look after you. You will think, "If He takes such good care of the birds and plants, why should He be displeased with me?"

But if there is no love in your life then you know that there is no one but your bank balance to look after you. Then your only friend is your wealth. If there is no love in your life who will worry about you in your old age? Who will massage your tired feet? Who will help you? Who will

support you in your old age? If there is no love in your life, no one will. Then you will only have your money. It will be your only friend. In a miserly, loveless life there is no support, no help but wealth. So you will find that the heart of a rich man is as lifeless as his grip on his wealth is solid. Love's nature is to share; hoarding is difficult for love. The man who hoards does so because he does not have the courage to share. He has no heart, no feeling for sharing.

Love is giving away; love is charity itself. Love means sharing with all.
You prepare your son to earn money, to reach a high position in the government, to be a man of prestige, to be an Alexander or a Napoleon or a Birla. You are doing all you can to see that he does not become a man. None of the things I have mentioned are possible if he becomes a man in the true sense of the word. If he becomes a man, then how can he become a Napoleon or a Birla or the president of the nation? If he becomes a man, then all these doors are closed to him. All these doors lead to inhumanity, to savagery, to animalism; they do not lead to the human attributes, to becoming humane. To open these doors, hatred and violence are the keys; love leads to the door of God.
And so love is lost. By and by, a child's relationship with himself is broken; by and by, his relationship with his heart is cut off. He begins to live without roots; he begins to wander here and there looking for what is missing in his life. But he himself does not know what is missing. He has no knowledge, no awareness of what it is he has lost or when he lost it. He was very small, very young then. When you trained him to move away from love he had no idea at all what you were doing. He trusted you. He believed what his parents said. He began to conform to the society, to the culture; he followed the advice of his elders and of his teachers.

He did not know what was happening. In his ignorance, his relationship with himself was cut off; in his unconsciousness, his roots were severed.
In Japan, gardeners give a particular shape to certain trees, and Swami Ram was surprised to see them when he first visited that country. He could not imagine how such trees could exist. The trees were two to three hundred years old and only six to eight inches high! It was hard for him to believe a three-hundred-year-old tree could only be six inches high, so he asked the gardeners to tell him the trick, the secret. The tree increased in size but did not grow high at all! Its trunk thickened but it did not rise upwards at all!
The secret, the gardeners told him, was to keep cutting back the roots. The tree is planted in an iron pot with a broken bottom, they explained. The roots are not allowed to go deep; their tips are snipped periodically.
When roots do not penetrate deep into the earth, trees do not grow high. They grow older and older, their trunks increase in size, they look old and withered, but they cannot grow in height. The only remedy, the only way for them to grow tall is to allow their roots to go deeper and deeper into the earth. A tree grows upward in proportion to the depth of its roots; the ratio is the same. How can a tree grow tall if its roots are trimmed regularly? It will remain stunted.

This art, this trick of stunting trees, is very much in fashion in Japan. That day, Swami Ram noted in his diary that Satan was playing the same trick on man.
The whole human race has become stunted, as if someone were continuously pruning its roots. The trees do not know what is happening to them; their roots are hidden in the earth -- but the roots of your love have been severed and if you do not take steps to correct this mischief you will never be able to reach those roots again. And then, even if you visit temples and mosques, even if you worship and

pray and perform all sorts of religious rites, nothing will come of it. It will all be to no avail. No matter how hard you try, your prayers will not reach God. Only a prayer of love can reach to Him. If love is present, it is not even necessary to pray. Then, even if you say nothing, you are heard. But if there is no love, nothing whatsoever reaches Him.

Now let us try to understand these sayings of Kabir.

Each and every word is invaluable. Before Kabir the Upanishads lose their luster. The Vedas look pitiful and second-rate before him. Kabir is singular, unique. Although he is illiterate he has succeeded in extracting the essence from the experience of his life. He is not a scholar; he has expressed this essence very briefly, not at all in great detail. His words are like seed -- mantras:

LOVE'S NOT GROWN IN GARDENS;
LOVE'S NOT SOLD AT MARKET.

HE WHO WANTS IT, KING OR COMMONER,
GIVES HIS HEAD AND TAKES IT.

In the world of love there is no distinction between king and commoner. Where love is concerned there is no question of poverty or of nobility. In love, the beggar and the king are on the same level.

There is only one way to obtain love. The man who wants love GIVES HIS HEAD AND TAKES IT. The man who wants love will have to lose himself, will have to sacrifice himself for it. He will have to sacrifice his ego, his pretence, his false show, his feeling of "I". This is what Kabir means by "head." He will have to sacrifice his head. Love will not be born in you so long as you are not prepared to lose your head.

Go into this a bit more deeply. There are two dimensions to

this giving of the head. One aspect is that your ego must fall, must disappear, must go away. Your ego is contained in your head. This is why you often admonish others to hold their heads high. And when you have insulted someone, you will say how you showed him you were somebody, how you made him bow his head. The head has become the symbol of the ego. That is also why you lay your head at the feet of the one to whom you have surrendered. Why the head? There are other limbs to the body, but it is because the head represents the ego. So you bow down and lay your head at the feet of the person to whom you have surrendered yourself completely.

And when you become angry with someone you hit him on the head with your shoe. The head is synonymous with the ego. This is its domain.
Kabir says that if you give up the ego it makes no difference whether you are poor or rich, white or black; he says that you can fill yourself with love, that you can take as much as you want.
You cannot purchase love in the market because then there would be a difference between the poor man and the rich man, because then the rich man would be able to buy it but the poor man would be left out. Love is obtained unconditionally; there is no question of paying any price. There is only one condition to be fulfilled. There is only one barrier. The mind, filled with the ego, thinking it is everything, feeling it is the center of the world, cannot fall in love. It cannot be in love with anyone because the very meaning of love is to make the other the center of one's life. The other becomes so important that he becomes the center and you remain on the periphery. The man who is full of love says, "I will live and die for the other; I will breathe in and out for the other, and if necessary I will sacrifice myself -- but I will save the other."
Love means the transformation of the center. An egoist

considers himself to be the center. He says, "I must be saved even at the cost of the whole world. Even if it is necessary to destroy all, I will save myself."

The ego is aggressive, and so when the egoist shows his love for someone he destroys him; he tries to destroy the other's individuality. In this kind of false love-making countless people have lost their individuality.
You say you love your wife or your husband, but everything you do is geared to curbing the other's individuality. The husband tries to destroy the wife's individuality, tries to destroy her freedom, her very self. He tries to make his wife his shadow, something to be used whenever he desires, something without its own will, without its own freedom, without its own strength. And the wife tries to do the same thing. Each plays the same political game. All the time the wife is busy trying to make her husband a slave, henpecking him.
In America, a certain woman filed suit against her husband. Her finger had been chopped off in a car accident and she was claiming a million dollars. When he heard the amount asked, even the judge was shocked. He said, "I agree you should receive something since you were not responsible for the accident, but, even considering the harm that has been done to you, the amount seems exorbitant." "I used to make my husband dance on the tip of that finger," the wife replied. "It was not an ordinary finger at all!"
Wives try to henpeck their husbands and husbands try to keep their wives in control. This is why they are always quarreling.

You will never find a bigger quarrel anywhere in the world than marriage. And it is perennial. All quarrels come to an end at some point or other -- even peace treaties are eventually signed and wars finally end -- but the quarrel between husband and wife goes on and on forever. It

never ends.
Once a policeman arrested a priest for driving without his lights on. When he appeared before the magistrate the priest said, "I did not know the lights were not working, so please forgive me. As I explained to the policeman, there must have been some mechanical failure. Everything worked fine yesterday, so I did not bother to check today." The judge replied, "This is not a very grave offence, and I believe you. Yet I also believe the policeman. Do you think the policeman arrested you because he didn't like you? Has he ever had any trouble with you before? Have you ever done any harm to him?" "I cannot remember any other harm I might have done him," the priest said, "except that I performed his marriage three years ago. Maybe he is taking revenge on me because of that!"
The institution of marriage has become a sad affair, an affliction, because it is a conflict, a constant quarrel. And what is the cause of this quarrel? It is because one desires to become the other's master, because one desires to control the other. The desire to become the other's master is a form of violence, and this desire has no relation whatsoever to love.

You are not able to love, and yet children are born to you! And then the same old game of ownership goes on -- this time over them. You suppress them; you dominate them. You are engaged in killing them, in suppressing their selves. You think that children should not be allowed to be free, that it is dangerous. You insist that they obey you, because you think that whatsoever you say is true. But you don't know what truth is at all! You have no knowledge whatsoever of what is right and of what is wrong! Your own life has been a waste, and yet you claim dominion over a small child? You say to him, "I am your father, so whatever I say is right and you must accept it as such." What is your

motive? What do you mean by asserting yourself like this? You simply want to turn him into an object, into a thing; you want to kill his sense of freedom, his self-respect.
It generally happens that children who are lifeless, dull and lethargic are praised by their parents for their obedience, and children who are full of life, who are active, who jump up and down, who run here and there are complained about. Then it comes as a great surprise to parents when obedient children turn out to be worthless and the mischievous ones, shine. They shine because they have energy, vitality. They shine in spite of your whole clever conspiracy to control everything around you, to be the master of all.

The seed of love cannot sprout because of this burning desire to be the master, to be the be-all and the end-all. Love is the art of dissolving your ego. If you really love your son you will place your ego at his feet. Then you will not be an egoistic father. Then you will marvel at how your son will reciprocate. As soon as you set your ego aside he will set his aside. Now you will be cooperating with each other.
Before now the son has been feeling sad and troubled; he has just been waiting for the chance to be free. He has been telling himself that soon the opportunity will come, that as time advances you will become weaker and weaker and he will still be a strong young man. Your son will harass you; he will take revenge on you. Then you will think that he has gone astray. But in fact you have only reaped what you have sown. When he was weak you harassed him; now that he is strong and you are weak, he is harassing you. This is the unalterable law of KARMA -- you reap what you sow. If you are not egoistical with your son there is virtually no possibility of his being egoistical with you when you are weak, when you are old.

We have invented beautiful ways to harass one another. On the outside they are very attractively painted, and we disguise them with nice names. We destroy and murder in the name of love. We kill in the name of discipline; we murder in the name of obedience.

All this shows is ego.

HE WHO WANTS IT, KING OR COMMONER,
GIVES HIS HEAD AND TAKES IT.

Whosoever desires love should bear in mind that, whether he desires it or not, he is still going to remain as empty as a clay jug. He will only be filled with sorrow and weeping; he will not be filled with life. Without love, no one has ever attained to joy, to celebration. Nor will he ever. This is a perennial rule of life.
So the first meaning of GIVES HIS HEAD is that a man gives up his ego. Whenever love is present the ego yields. Even if the person is younger than you, even if he is your son you will yield -- because when love is present the ego no longer remains. Even if a woman is your wife you will not set yourself up before her, full of ego; you will not set yourself up as her lord and master, as her PATI-DEVATA, as her husband-diety -- you will yield. And this phenomenon of love is such that neither the wife nor the husband cowers before the other; in fact, both bow to the god of love. No one bows and scrapes to anyone, but both are yielding. If you like you can say they are yielding to each other, or you can say they are bowing to an invisible god of love that sits within their hearts.
The first meaning of the word head' is ego; the second, thoughts.
Whether they are relevant or irrelevant, your head is a collection of thoughts.

Your mind is nothing but a vast crowd of thoughts. And it is a very busy and active crowd indeed. Because of it your whole energy is wasted, and you have no energy left for love. The head is an exploiter. It drains you to such an extent that the flow of energy is unable to reach your heart. It is all expended in thinking. And ninety-nine percent of your thoughts are useless; they have no substance whatsoever. No harm at all will be done if you stop thinking.
But you do not live in consciousness; you are not aware. When you are sitting quietly, do you ever observe what you are thinking about? Have you ever watched the rubbish that goes on in your mind? What do you hope to achieve by permitting all this rubbish? It goes on during the day and at night when you are asleep; in your waking hours and in your dreams. It runs in circles all the time. And bear in mind that even the most trivial thought consumes energy. Scientists have come to the conclusion that the amount of energy you would expend in one hour digging a pit in a field is the same as the amount you would expend in fifteen minutes thinking and worrying. This means mental activity requires four times more energy than physical activity.
These days, man's physical activity has decreased, but his mental activity has increased and continues to do so. The head has become an exploiter; it does not allow the energy to flow anywhere else.

The head consumes all of the energy itself. The heart is not aggressive. It waits. And because the heart can wait, it does without. Your heart will remain as dry as a desert until the supply of energy that goes to your ego and to your thoughts is cut off. The flow of water will never be able to reach your heart. The seed of love is lying there, and it will only bloom when the water reaches it.
Try to grasp the meaning of the phrase, GIVE HIS HEAD.

When thoughts and ego disappear, the head disappears. Then there is a possibility for love; then love will be able to bloom. Now you have removed the obstacle that smothered the seed of love. There is no other impediment but your head. It sits there like a stone, blocking love's flow.

STUDYING GREAT BOOKS MANY HAVE DIED.
NONE EVER BECOME LEARNED.
TWO LETTERS AND A HALF IN LOVE;
WHO STUDIES THEM IS LEARNING.

Kabir says many people simply spend their lives reading and reading. They read countless books and scriptures and finally they die, but they do not attain to wisdom. Wisdom has no relation whatsoever to information. As you keep on reading and listening and accumulating facts your memory becomes very full indeed, and you will know much without really knowing anything. Because of this great burden of words you will be under the illusion, under the false impression, you are a man of wisdom.

According to Kabir, a man of letters, a man of information, is a scholar who has only read about love. The Hindi word for love is PREM, and in the Hindi alphabet it is made up of two and a half letters. Kabir says to read these two and one-half letters in a book is meaningless. He says they must be experienced through the book of life, that a man must enter the university of life, that he must attend the college of life. This is the only place words like this can be learned.
Although the word PREM is made up of two and one-half letters, Kabir also wishes to indicate another, deeper meaning. Only when a person falls in love with someone do the two and one-half letters of PREM become complete.

One letter is for the lover, the second letter is for the beloved and the half is for that something unknown that exists between the two.
Why does Kabir call it half? He could easily have called it three. There is a beautiful reason for calling it half, for indicating that it is incomplete. Kabir says no matter how hard you try, love never becomes complete, never becomes completely full. You are never totally contented with love. You never feel it is enough; you never feel fully satisfied. No matter how much love you feel or make or show, love always remains incomplete. It is like God. God keeps on expanding and expanding, becoming fuller and fuller, and yet his expanding keeps continuing, keeps going on and on and on.

The fact that love always remains incomplete is also an indication of its everlastingness. Remember, whatsoever attains to completion, dies. Completion is death, because then nothing remains to do, nothing remains to be. There is no more movement, no further progress. Anything that becomes complete is certain to die. What else can it become? What else is left? Only something that lives forever is always incomplete, always half -- and no matter how hard you may try to fill it, it will remain incomplete.
To remain incomplete is love's nature. You can strive as hard as you like after satisfaction, but you will see that each satisfaction only makes you more dissatisfied, only makes you crave for more and more. The more you drink, the more your thirst increases. This is not the water that quenches your thirst when you drink it, this is the water that kindles your thirst more and more. So a lover is never satisfied and his joy is endless. His joy has no end to it, because joy can only come to an end when things reach completion.
A sexual person can be satisfied but a lover cannot. A

sexual act has an end to it, a limit, but love has no end, no boundaries. Love is beginningless, just like God. Love is God's representative in this world. Love is the gateway to that dimension beyond time. Love is the penetration of superman into the world of man.
Love is the symbol of God in the world, and the nature of love is like the nature of God.

God will never be completed. If he were to become complete, our world and our universe would be finished. God's perfection is like a very subtle imperfection. The Upanishads say that even if you remove the perfect from that perfection He will still remain perfect, and if you add the perfect to that perfection even then He will be the same as He was before. He is what He is. With Him, neither increase nor decrease is possible. And the same is true of love. Love will be the same in the end as it was in the beginning.
The love that becomes exhausted, that wears out, is not real love at all. It can only be a strong and violent desire for sexual enjoyment, and that relates to and culminates in the body alone. Anything related to the soul has no end, no point of termination. The body dies, the mind dies, but the soul continues to be. Its journey is infinite; it has no restingplace. If it had a restingplace that would also be its conclusion.
Kabir says that the word PREM is composed of two and one-half letters, and pointing to these two and one-half letters of PREM he makes a deep and significant statement about the incompleteness of love. Between the lover and the beloved there is an invisible flow, an invisible bridge uniting the two into one.

NARROW IS THE LANE OF LOVE.
TWO WILL NEVER FIT.

WHEN I WAS, THE LORD WAS NOT.
NOW HE IS; I AM NOT.

The path of love is very narrow. No other is as narrow. And two cannot walk together there.
In the beginning, in the first meeting between lovers, there are two and one-half, but finally the other two disappear and only love remains. The lover feels he is lost, that only the other exists; the beloved feels she is lost, that only her lover is -- but in fact both are lost, and only love remains. Both heads disappear and only the one in the middle remains. Only love remains. And so the meeting between God and man never takes place. It cannot. When the moment of meeting comes the man is dissolved; as long as the man is, the moment of meeting never comes.
Look at the whole phenomenon in the following way -- if you let a drop of water fall into the ocean it will maintain its own identity only as long as it does not actually touch the ocean. It may only be for a very short distance, but the drop still exists as it falls. There is the ocean and there is the drop. This is exactly what is meant by TWO LETTERS AND A HALF IN LOVE -- the drop, the ocean and the fall. The drop is on its way but it is still the drop. It still has its own identity; there is still a short distance between the two. That distance is filled with love, filled with attraction. The drop is in the act of falling but the meeting has not yet taken place. No sooner does the meeting take place than the two are one.

Then there is no longer the ocean and the drop. Then the drop will be the ocean and the ocean will be the drop.
In one of his couplets Kabir says how very surprised he is to see the drop merging into the ocean, to see that the drop has now become the ocean.

SEEKING, SEEKING; LONG SOUGHT.
NOW HOW TO FIND KABIR?
THE OCEAN FELL INTO THE DROP.
HOW TO TAKE IT OUT?

You have to understand Kabir's point of view. He is speaking from the standpoint of the drop -- from your standpoint. And in yet another couplet he says he is surprised to see the ocean merging into the drop and asks how the ocean can be removed again. Here he is looking through the eyes of the ocean.
There are two points of view. One is of the drop -- I am lost; only the ocean remains. The second viewpoint is of the ocean -- I am lost; only the drop is. The drop has become vast and the ocean has merged into it.
If you understand this correctly, if you can look at this from the viewpoint of the half, then you will see that neither the ocean nor the drop remains. The ocean was the tiniest bit less before its meeting with the drop. It was less by one drop. But that tiny amount is not at all insignificant. The drop may have been very, very tiny before it met the ocean, but the whole ocean itself was less. Now the drop and the ocean are no more as they were.

Now both are lost. Now only the merger remains, now only love remains, now only the half remains. The lover is lost, the beloved is lost, the devotee is lost, the Lord is lost, Kabir is lost, God is lost. And only love remains.
How can one experience that infinite and immortal love from the scriptures? How can you grasp this love from the Vedas, from the Koran, from the Bible? How can the master even explain it to you? Then what can the master do? He can only do this much -- he can give you a push so that you can experience it. Unless you experience it for yourself there is no other way for you to know love.

NARROW IS THE LANE OF LOVE.
TWO WILL NEVER FIT.
WHEN I WAS, THE LORD WAS NOT.
NOW HE IS; I AM NOT.

People say they want to seek God. They say, "Where is God? We want to find Him." They also ask for proof that God exists. They do not understand what they are saying at all. There is only one way to seek God, and that is to lose yourself. You will not have the experience of God as long as you try to save yourself, as long as you try to retain your own identity. You can only have the experience of God when you are not. You will never have proof of God's existence; you will only have it when you are lost, when you are not.
Whosoever searches for proof that God exists will come to the conclusion that He does not exist.

You can only obtain atheism from the scriptures, not theism. From the words of the scriptures you will only be able to conclude that God is not. From words, you will never conclude that God is.
Omar Khayyam has said that he went to many learned men to obtain true knowledge. He says they were very well-read, that he listened to their learned discourses, to their discussions and to their arguments for and against, but that he returned empty-handed, that he obtained no glimmer of true knowledge whatsoever from them. You can never get anything from them. Even if you memorize their words nothing will come of it; you will always come home empty-handed.
Is anything more lowly than a word? Yet it is very interesting that a man with nothing more than a vast storehouse of words is so proud of them and considers himself to be a man of knowledge. It is interesting how

such a man thinks he really knows something. This is sheer foolishness.

STUDYING GREAT BOOKS MANY HAVE DIED.
NONE EVER BECOME LEARNED.
TWO LETTERS AND A HALF IN LOVE,
WHO STUDIES THEM IS LEARNING.

And then:
KABIR SAYS: CLOUDS OF LOVE
CAME ON ME SHOWERING;
SOAKED THE HEART,
GREENING THE INNER JUNGLE.

Can there be rain from word-clouds? And if rain could pour down from clouds of words would they make your garden green? You cannot cheat the trees.

They will not be deceived by a shower of words; they require real water to flower. The water of experience is the real water.

KABIR SAYS: CLOUDS OF LOVE
CAME ON ME SHOWERING...

No sooner do you do away with the head than the rains come. The clouds will begin to shower on you as soon as your ego disappears. The clouds of love are always hovering above you. They have not forsaken you, not even for a moment, because love is your innermost nature. Love is the nature of your soul. It is not something you amass on the outside and then distribute to others. Just as heat is the nature of fire and freshness is the nature of water, love is the nature of the soul. But your eyes are not focused on the clouds of love. Your gaze is always downcast. The clouds hover about you, and sometimes you hear their call

but your mind is such that you give some other interpretation to what you have heard.
In one of his famous poems Rabindranath Tagore tells of a huge temple served by one hundred priests, of a temple where lakhs of rupees were regularly spent on food and on various rites. One night the chief priest had a dream in which the temple deity said he would visit the temple the following night and that suitable preparations to receive him should be made.
When the priest arose in the morning he said to himself, "A dream is just a dream after all.

It cannot be true." In general, priests never have any faith at all in the deity of their temple, although the devotees who go to the temple may. The priests of the temple have no faith because they see their calling as a profession. Such people never have, nor can they ever have, any faith in the temple deity. And yet the chief priest was somewhat nervous. He began to wonder if perhaps the dream might come true after all. If no preparations to receive the deity were made it would be terrible; if nothing were ready when the deity arrived he would be in great difficulty, so he decided he had better tell his fellow-priests about the dream. He called them together and told them what had happened. "It is only a dream," he said. "You don't have to believe it, but if it does come true we could be caught unaware." The other priests said, "There is no problem. We will make the necessary preparations and if the god does not come we will enjoy the food ourselves." This is what the priests have always done. They prepare food for their gods and then eat it themselves. They also decided that since the temple had not been cleaned in some time it had better be done as well. No one really had any faith in the dream, and they all kept remarking to each other, "Have dreams ever come true?" In any case they cleaned the temple and made the other necessary preparations. They

lit lamps, burned incense and decorated the temple with flowers.

When evening came there was no sign of the god's arrival. Evening turned into night and still he did not come. At last the priests began to murmur among themselves, "We have been very foolish. We believed this dream too. Let's enjoy the food and then go to bed." They were quite tired after the day's activity, so they ate their dinner and went to bed.

The god's chariot arrived at midnight. The rumble of the wheels resounded throughout the temple. One priest was awakened from his sleep by the noise and it seemed to him the chariot was coming nearer and nearer. He called to the other priests, "Listen! Wake up! It sounds as if the god's chariot is approaching the temple!"
The other priests replied, "Stop all your silly chatter. We are exhausted. There is no chariot. It's only the wind knocking against the door." And so, sloughing the whole thing off, they fell asleep again.
The chariot stopped at the gate and the god began to mount the steps. The sound of his footsteps could be heard clearly. And then he knocked at the door. One of the priests said, "Listen, it sounds as if he has arrived. Someone is knocking at the door."
When he heard this, another priest became a little vexed. "Can't you see we are tired from the day's work?" he said. "Stop your prattle. Have you ever known a dream to come true? There is no sound of knocking; it is just the rumbling of thunder.

Go to sleep and be quiet!"
When they arose in the morning they saw wheel-marks running up to the steps of the temple. They saw that someone had climbed the steps, that the footprints of the

god were there. But as Tagore says, it was too late. They had missed the opportunity.
The clouds of love surround you on all sides. Those who have real vision can see them, but you cannot. Your head is the barrier; it stands in between. And the clouds are unable to shower upon you; and even if there were a shower, the drops of rain would not be able to reach your heart. Your head is like an earthen jug that has been coated in grease and so the drops would scatter everywhere. The rain would be unable to reach your heart. Your heart is the jungle about which Kabir is speaking:

KABIR SAYS: CLOUDS OF LOVE
CAME ON ME SHOWERING;
SOAKED THE HEART,
GREENING THE INNER JUNGLE.

The heart is wild, like a jungle. Intelligence is polished, refined by society, but the heart is a jungle -- primitive, uncultured, uncivilized. It is like the wild animals, like the trees, like the clouds in the sky. But the hand of man has not been able to touch his heart; it cannot reach there. Society cannot move beyond the head; only God can reach your heart. The man who gives up his head, his ego, his thoughts, is drenched by the shower from the clouds of love, Kabir says.

The soul is drenched and the jungle becomes green.

A HEART DRY OF LOVE;
RAM AGAIN UNTASTED.
THUS IS MAN IN THIS WORLD:
HIS ARISING WASTED.

At the time of your death, Kabir says, you will find that your life has been wasted. If your lips have not uttered the

name of God and if your heart is not filled with His love, at the end you will realize that you have missed. Then you will open your door and see how often His chariot has tried to reach the temple of your heart. You will see His footprints on your steps, you will realize that He has knocked many, many times but that every time you have misinterpreted all the signs. "It is the rumbling of the clouds," you have said. "It is the blowing of the wind. It is the sound of some wanderer." One by one you have missed the opportunities. And all of this you will realize at the hour of your death.

At the moment of death you will find people weeping, dejected, dismayed. But this dismay is not because of death. It is because people realize they have wasted their lives; it is because they feel that life has been wasted. The opportunity was held out to them but they have let it slip through their hands.

No one is really afraid of death. How can you be afraid of something about which you know nothing whatsoever? You have never encountered death. How can you be afraid of it? How can you fear a stranger? Has death ever harmed you? Has it ever done anything to you to make you weep and tremble and cry aloud? No! The real cause is something else altogether.

You realize for the first time that you have wasted your entire life. Then you think, "What can I do now? Now there is no time. Now death is standing in front of me." This whole feeling of helplessness is nothing but the outcome of an unsuccessful life.

Those who have lived a righteous life; those who have known the secret of life; those in whose lives there has been godliness; those whose innermost throne has not been vacant; those whose lives have been full of love and whose lips constantly form the name of God, welcome death joyfully. The man who has known the secret of life

knows no death. Such a man sees death as a restingplace, as a place of deep rest that follows the exertion of life. But you will be afraid. You will be afraid then because at present you are wasting your lives away.

A HEART DRY OF LOVE;
RAM AGAIN UNTASTED.
THUS IS MAN IN THIS WORLD:
HIS ARISING WASTED.

Never stop looking to see whether or not your heart has become filled with love yet. Time is fleeting. You cannot stop it; no one has ever succeeded in reversing the clock. Time flows on continuously. Every moment life slips through your hands; every moment you move closer and closer to death. Death may come at any moment. And death shows no one forgiveness or mercy. No matter how hard you plead with it, you cannot hold death off a single moment longer.

So keep on searching your heart to ascertain whether or not it has yet become filled with love. And if you find that it is still not filled with love, that it is still a desert where the rain has not yet fallen, then be quick to get rid of your head, to get rid of your ego. This is what meditation is; this is what prayer is. The art of severing the head, of getting rid of the ego, is yoga. No sooner does your ego disappear, no sooner do your thoughts go, than love begins to pour into your heart. God showers continuously, but your head has blocked the access to your heart.

A HEART DRY OF LOVE;
RAM AGAIN UNTASTED.

And the name of God, of RAM, automatically springs to the

lips of the man whose heart is filled with love. This does not mean you have to keep repeating the name of RAM, it means that your mouth, your lips, your tongue savor the taste, savor the flavor hidden in His name. Your palate will enjoy no other taste so much. The taste of that name will roll on your tongue constantly, just as a sweet held on the tongue melts slowly, sending its sweetness vibrating through the body. The name of God has a kind of sweetness; it has a particular taste of its own.
There is no point in simply repeating God's name, nor is there any point in putting a sheet on your bed with the word God' printed on it so that others can read it.

This will serve no purpose whatsoever. The name of RAM has to send thrills pulsating through your whole body.

ROUSED, ECSTATIC WITH HIS NAME,
LOVE-DRUNK, OVERFLOWING,
REVELING IN HIS VISION.
WHY BOTHER WITH LIBERATION?

Kabir is saying something very unique here. He is saying that a man who becomes saturated with the taste of that name becomes so aroused, becomes so ecstatic from having drunk so much, that he begins to overflow. You will only be able to love others when you become so overwhelmed by the love of God that it begins to overflow from your very being. This is the state of an ecstatic man. A moment comes when you have so much love you will go mad if you do not share it, when you are so filled with love you will be in great difficulty if you do not empty yourself. In another poem Kabir says to empty yourself with both hands.
But your present condition is quite the opposite. Each of you is like an empty bowl. You wander about like a beggar, beseeching others to fill your bowl with love. You are

beggars. You ask everyone you meet to toss you a scrap of love. Your eyes are desperate for love; they are begging for love, and even if someone bestows a little smile on you, you are thrilled. There is no end to your beggarliness. If someone tosses a stone in your begging-bowl you think you have been given a diamond.

Among yourselves you beg love from each other all the time. You clamor after it. And bear in mind that those from whom you are begging are as empty of love as you. They can only give you consolation; they cannot give you love. Even if they want to give you love, they cannot. You are beggars standing before other beggars with your begging-bowls.

Every beggar is an egoist; every beggar thinks he is an emperor. But inside he is still a beggar. He speaks of giving only so he can get. You give a little love to someone else, but you only do so because you want love in return. It is a bargain. The other is only trying to barter in love; he is only trying to exploit you too.

In this world everyone begs love from someone else -- the son from the father, the father from the son, one friend from another -- and not one single person sees that the person from whom he is begging has also come to him to ask for love. That is why their kind of love is a failure. Initially, this sort of deception can work for a few days, but how long can any deception last? Very soon you will realize that the other is also a beggar, and then you will be in difficulty.

You see a woman and you think she is full of love; a woman sees you and she thinks you are full of love too. Each of you tries to deceive the other. It is all a deception. The whole thing is like putting a lump of dough on a hook to catch a fish.

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You call this "my" liberation. But bear in mind there is only one kind of liberation, and that is liberation from "I," liberation from the ego itself.
There cannot be any such thing as "my" liberation. How can "I" be liberated? "I" is the bondage! "I" can never be free. There is no liberating "I," there is only liberation from "I." That is why devotees often achieve the liberation yogis are unable to attain. A yogi says, "I want liberation. I desire to be liberated," but his liberation is linked with his "I." It seems to be the last desire of the "I." But no matter how purified it may be, it is still a desire. Chains may be forged of gold, but they are still chains.

ROUSED, ECSTATIC WITH HIS NAME,
LOVE-DRUNK, OVERFLOWING,
REVELLING IN HIS VISION.
WHY BOTHER WITH LIBERATION?

Such a man says, "I care nothing about liberation; I do not even ask for it. I only want to see Your face." Such a man is even ready to forego liberation, and in so doing he

becomes liberated. That is the only liberation -- when there is no desiring at all. The desire to be liberated is not present in such a man. He only desires to see Him; he only desires a glimpse of Him. A devotee is satisfied with very little, and so he receives everything. But a yogi demands all. Bear this in mind -- as you become satisfied with less and less you will receive much more.

But when you become satisfied with whatsoever you are....

I say to you, do not even ask to see His face. You should not even say, "I only want a glimpse of Your face." Why should you even hold on to that desire? Only say, "Whatever Thy will may be it is fine with me. If I get a glimpse it is okay; if I do not, even then it is okay." That very moment you will be liberated.

TALE OF LOVE, UNTELLABLE.
NOT A BIT'S EVER TOLD.
THE SWEETS OF A DUMB ONE --
HE ENJOYS... AND SMILES.

These SUTRAS are filled with love. Kabir says that whosoever gives up his head attains love, that clouds of love shower down on such a man, drenching his soul -- so much so that it overflows into an abundant sharing with others. He also says love is such freedom that not even the desire for liberation remains. Love is the highest kind of liberation, and when one achieves love even the desire for MOKSHA, for ultimate freedom, disappears.
It is difficult to put what Kabir wishes to express into words. It is virtually impossible. Only he who knows, knows. Only he who lives in love knows. It is a matter of personal experience. That is why Kabir says love is like a sweet tasted by one who is dumb. When a man who is dumb eats a sweet, he simply enjoys it and smiles. If you

ask him, "What is the matter? Why are you smiling?" he cannot express his feeling in words, he can only keep on smiling.

And so the man who has drunk pure love also smiles. He is also dumb; he is also at a loss to express his joy. He is so filled with the taste that even the experiencer has disappeared. If you can understand his smile then you will know it is the only way he can indicate his feeling of great joy.
Go to the enlightened ones, to the men of wisdom. Don't worry too much about what they say, but be alert and thorough enough to see what they are. Their very beings are indicative. What they are is not something that can be put into words. The enlightened man is like the man who is dumb and eats a sweet; he simply smiles after he has tasted it.
To sit at the feet of the enlightened man, at the feet of the masters, is the only meaning of the word SATSANG. You should sit at the feet of those who have tasted that sweet, who have tasted the sweetness of love. Their lives are filled with ecstasy; their lives are in flower. You should inhale their fragrance; you should drown yourselves in their taste; you should merge totally into their joy. Don't be too concerned about what they say. Be alert. Understand what they are. And perhaps you will understand their secret. If you are able to understand them, you will be able to progress, you will be able to move forward.
THE END.

Tell, and still its hidden

KNOWLEDGE OF INNER EXPERIENCE
MANY COME ASKING FOR.
STRUCK DUMB SAVOURING THE SWEET,
WHOSE MOUTH WILL TELL THE TASTE?

THE SIGN OF THE DUMB
ONLY THE DUMB UNDERSTAND.
LIKEWISE, THE JOY OF A SAGE
ONLY A SAGE KNOWS.

NOT OF WRITTEN WORDS
BUT OF EXPERIENCING:
WHEN THE BRIDE MEETS HIS EMBRACE
THE GUESTS ALL FADE AWAY.

THAT WHICH SEES CANNOT SPEAK,
WHICH SPEAKS CANNOT HEAR,
THAT WHICH HEARS CANNOT EXPLAIN.
WHY TONGUE, EYES, EARS?

WHAT'S FULL EMPTIES OUT;
WHAT'S EMPTY FILLS UP.
EMPTY, FULL -- NEITHER TO BE FOUND.
THE EXPERIENCE IS THIS.

SUCH A WONDER! IT'S NEVER TOLD
TELL, AND STILL IT'S HIDDEN.
KORAN AND VEDA COULDN'T WRITE IT.
IF I SAY IT, WHO WILL LISTEN?

Let us go deeply into the meaning of each word. There is a saying about "containing the ocean in a pot." Kabir has done that. He has managed to contain the unlimited in very small words, in words we use every day. But Kabir has given them a unique meaning. You may think, "But this is all known to me!" when you hear them; you may understand the surface meaning of the words, but you are not acquainted with their depth. And each word is so powerful it can set you off on an infinite journey.

KNOWLEDGE OF INNER EXPERIENCE
MANY COME ASKING FOR.
STRUCK DUMB SAVOURING THE SWEET,
WHOSE MOUTH WILL TELL THE TASTE?

Information about objects can be collected, but this is knowledge you have

obtained from outside. You perceive objects from four sides; you can walk all around them. For example, when you go to a Hindu temple you walk around the idol of God, but this walking only happens outwardly and so it has become phoney, a mere ritual. No matter how much you may know about something from the outside, your information about it is never inner, never from your own experience. So long as we do not enter the depths of something our information about it will always be surface. It is like going to see the ocean and coming back home simply having glanced at the waves. The real ocean, the depths and the treasures of the real ocean, are hidden beneath the waves. On the surface there is only foam; on the surface there is only conflict, competition, enmity. In the waves, only mischief and upheaval exist. The real ocean is hidden beneath them. There is only one way to know that ocean and that is to dive deeply into it. And there is only one kind of diving, the diving into yourself.
No matter how deeply you penetrate the inner reaches of another, you will never be able to touch his soul. Your journey will be just an orbiting on his outer boundary.

So if you want to know the ocean through and through, then even diving into it is not enough. Then you have to become one with the ocean, just like a lump of rocksalt that is thrown into the sea dissolves and becomes one with it. Then and only then will you know the infinite depths of the ocean.
The experience of knowledge can only be of one's own self, and never of another's. We always remain a tiny bit removed from each other. Even when we make love we are still unable to reach the other's innermost depths -- even then we remain on the circumference. And this is the problem for lovers. Lovers feel they come very close to each other, but their actual experience with each other reveals to them that they always remain far away. As they come nearer and nearer to each other they begin to realize it is impossible to be really close. A distance always remains between the two. That is why love for another is never satisfying.
Love will only be satisfying when it is established in God. God is you; He is not someone else. And there, with God, the distance disappears completely. Kabir calls such an experience knowledge. Such an experience can be only of the self. Self-knowledge is the only knowledge; the rest is all information. Knowledge is only that which a man has tested for himself; it cannot be achieved without experience.

There are many things in this world that can be known through others, many things that can be known with no personal experience.

Whatever we know about this world, whatever information we have about it, for the most part is given to us by others. Scientists give us information about the various sciences; experts in geography tell us where the Himalayas are and where Tibet is, and this is how we gather information. This information received from others about the world can be accepted, but you cannot accept information from others about your self.
Whatsoever another tells you about yourself will be untrue. No matter what you have learned about yourself from the Upanishads, from the Vedas, from the Koran, from the Bible, from the saints, from the scholars -- give it no credence at all. After all, you are not a stranger to yourself! The idea that someone else can show you what you are is outrageous. What greater impotency can there be than your powerlessness even to know your self! What greater blindness can there be than

your inability to know your self!
Are you so enveloped in darkness that you need someone else to show you the light, to show you who you are? If you need someone else, then it is quite clear you have no concept whatsoever of your being, of who you are. And how can another person give you that knowledge? There is no other way to achieve that experience than for yourself.
The master can indicate to you how to dive into yourself, but he cannot show you anything, he cannot tell you anything about your self.

He can lead you to the bank of the river, but you will have to drink the water. And when you drink the water your thirst will be quenched. But that will be your own experience.
I can tell you everything there is to know about water -- its whole chemistry, how it is composed of oxygen and hydrogen, its different properties, at what temperature it becomes vapor, at what temperature it turns into ice -- but that will not quench your thirst. Your throat will remain parched and dry. No matter how great or how complete the information may be it will not quench your thirst. Mere information about the chemistry of water will not help you.
Understand what the master is indicating first -- then go in search of water and drink. Then you will have the experience of water for yourself. Then the dryness will disappear and your throat will feel cool; then the fires of deprivation and of uneasiness will vanish, and a kind of peace, a kind of satisfaction will well up within you. No one else can give you this experience, but you are quite capable of having it for yourself if you want to.
So far you have tried to obtain this experience from someone else. You do not even wish to exert yourself enough to drink. It is your thirst, so how can my water help you? You will have to find your own water. This is why all the enlightened men, all those who know, say there is no knowledge except that which comes from experience.

So free yourself as quickly as possible from whatever knowledge you have gathered, from whatever information you have accumulated that is not from your own experience. You will never start out in search of that spring of fresh water as long as this burden is on your head; because you are under the illusion you have known, without really having known; under the illusion you have drunk, without really having drunk; under the illusion you have acquired something, without really having acquired anything. This is an impossible situation.
Kabir is saying that you have read a lot, that you have accumulated much information, and that many people are satisfied with this kind of knowledge.
Kabir lived in Kashi, a place abounding in scholars. They believed it was enough to read, to accumulate knowledge from books. They were well-versed in the Vedas, in the Upanishads and in the other scriptures, and they looked upon Kabir as ignorant, as an illiterate man. In one sense, you can say Kabir was illiterate. If you consider a scholar as literate, as a well-educated man, then Kabir was definitely illiterate. But of what value is the scholar's knowledge? A scholar will go on and on about the immortality of the soul, but when death approaches you will find him trembling and weeping and wailing. All this talk of immortality will crumble into nothingness because he has not know it.

He has only read about immortality; he has only heard about it from someone else. It may be someone else's experience, but it is not his own.
When you possess the pure gold of your own experience you will be fully prepared to face the test of life, but the gold of another's experience will turn to clay in your hands. It will not help you face life at all. The knowledge you gain from others may help you pass tests in logic and reasoning, may help you to obtain a university degree, may earn you the world's respect as a man of letters, but you will know inside yourself that you have not attained true knowledge. Inside, the lamp will be unlit; inside, there will be no flame.
Scholars and pundits can deceive others, but how can they deceive themselves? Their so-called knowledge is like this story Buddha used to tell about a villager who sat at the door of his house, counting the cows and buffaloes of the other villagers as they passed by his door each morning and evening. He could tell how many cows and buffaloes there were in the village, but all of his activity never provided him with a single drop of milk. Buddha used to warn his disciples not to spend their lives like that villager.
All scholars are like that villager. They keep the accounts of others -- what the Vedas say, what the Koran says, what the Bible says. They spend their whole lives counting the cows and buffaloes of others without ever getting a single drop of milk to drink.

The experience must be your own.

KNOWLEDGE OF INNER EXPERIENCE
MANY COME ASKING FOR.
STUCK DUMB SAVOURING THE SWEET,
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The great difficulty is that the man who has known the truth cannot give it to you even if he wishes to. You have no comprehension of the affliction of the wise. You only know one affliction, the affliction of the ignorant. The enlightened man has known the real thing. He knows. He sees you groping in the dark and he wants to give you all that he knows, but he is helpless. That is his affliction.

STRUCK DUMB SAVOURING THE SWEET,
WHOSE MOUTH WILL TELL THE TASTE?

He has already tasted the sweet and he sees you still wandering all over in search of it. He sees you becoming more and more downcast, more and more miserable, more and more entangled in your problems, in your cares and sufferings. He wishes you could have the taste too; he wants the door of heaven to open for you as well. He wants to help you. He wants to cry out and say, "It is so very sweet!" But just as a man who is dumb is unable to cry aloud, the throat of the enlightened man is blocked; his lips cannot form the words. He is in the same position as the dumb man.
But the difficulty of the enlightened man is even greater than that of the man who is dumb.

A remedy for dumbness may be possible, but for the enlightened man there is no way out. If the difficulty were physical some cure could be found, but his

predicament is his inability to express what he has known. His dilemma arises out of the very nature of the experience of self-knowledge. If you also attain to that knowledge you will understand this quandary as well.

And even if the awakened man tries, his attempts are all unsuccessful. Not only are they unsuccessful, they can create the wrong impression. He wants to say one thing but has to say something else. He wants to say something definite and precise, but words are unable to express what it is he wants to say and they carry him somewhere else. He wants to lead you to a particular spot, but when he looks at you he sees he has led you to some other place, he sees you have misunderstood him.

This is why so many religious sects exist in the world. The enlightened preach religion, pure religion, but it branches off into sects. What the enlightened men have said has not been understood correctly. As it travels from them to you, truth becomes untruth and is misconstrued. No sooner do you hear something than you become involved in it and your mind gives it its own interpretation. You implant your own interpretation, your own meaning; you twist it to suit yourself. This is the distinction between real religion and sects.

The enlightened man tries to see that religion reaches you, but what actually happens is that it becomes distorted into a sect. He wants to make you free, but what happens is that you become even more tightly bound. And then a new difficulty arises. He wants love to manifest in your lives, but when he looks at you he sees you ready to fight in the name of love. Take the example of the Christians. Jesus used to say, "Love is God," and yet no other people have waged as many wars as the Christians. He said to turn the other cheek to the one who strikes you, and the Christians have killed hundreds of thousands of people. And do you know why they have massacred these people? With a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other they did this to bring them religion!

The rishis of the Vedas and the Upanishads say, "There is the same Brahman in all. He alone resides in all. He is spread throughout; He exists in the smallest particle." And what the Hindus have done is quite the opposite. The scholar who quotes the sutras of the Upanishads so often is not prepared to touch the lowborn, the untouchables. This proves he considers Brahman as untouchable. If Brahman is in all, then who can be looked upon as untouchable? Then who can be deemed unholy? But this has happened in this land of the enlightened. Not only was the untouchable not to be touched, he was punished if ever his shadow fell on a Brahmin! His shadow! Can a shadow be unholy? The shadow is a shadow; it is non-existent, completely unsubstantial! Suppose a Brahmin were sitting somewhere and an untouchable passed by.

If his shadow fell on the Brahmin he would have been thrashed, beaten, perhaps even killed -- the crime was considered punishable by death. What an inconceivable thing! This so-called knower-of-Brahman, afraid of a shadow!

Why were the minds of those who said Brahman was all-pervading so diseased? How did this happen?

Those who said that Brahman is all-pervading were perfectly correct, but those who heard it interpreted it in their own ways, in quite different senses. Words travel a very short distance between the master and his disciples, but even in that short distance everything is perverted. This perversion is not because of anything

related to the body, memory or mind -- if it were it could be corrected -- but it is nonetheless quite natural. The nature of this sort of discourse, of this sort of transmission, is such that we can only say exactly what it is we wish to say to those who have had similar experiences, to those who exist at the same level of experience. That is why Kabir says:

THE SIGNS OF THE DUMB
ONLY THE DUMB UNDERSTAND.
LIKEWISE, THE JOY OF A SAGE
ONLY A SAGE KNOWS.

The master is speaking from a particular level and the disciple is hearing at another level, at a different one. So how is a dialogue possible between the two? The master stands on a high peak of consciousness and the disciple is floundering in an abyss of darkness.

How can there be any dialogue between the two? The words of the master, spoken from the golden peak, have to descend into the dark abyss -- they are polluted with darkness before they enter you. In their journey to you the words are lost, and only darkness reaches you. Kabir says you will never truly understand until you and the master are both on the same level.
One dumb man understands the language of another. If one wishes to say to another, "It is very sweet," he will be able to do so by hand-signals. They share the same language. They are on the same level; they have the same experience. This means that a dialogue, a communication is possible between them.
Until our experience is on the same level, discussion is possible between us or criticism, but there cannot be a dialogue. If I say something to you, you may immediately begin to discuss in your mind whether what I have said is right or wrong; you may give reasons for and against it, but there will not be a dialogue. When there is a dialogue, no sooner is something said by one person than it is totally understood in the same sense by the listener -- with nothing whatsoever missing, with not the slightest difference at all. This is only possible if you are at the same level as I am. This is only possible if two individuals -- the speaker and the listener -- are standing at the same level. Then there is no distinction.

Only the enlightened can explain to the enlightened -- but then it is quite useless because then there is no need. This is a paradox of life. There is no need to explain to one who understands, but it is necessary to explain to one who does not understand. And it is not possible to explain to him.
Then what can be done? How can those who have known distribute their knowledge? How can they share their precious treasure? How can those who have known lead you to that place where knowing happens? How can those who have tasted truth invite you on that journey?
Many ways, many methods have been found. All the techniques of yoga have been uncovered to create a bridge between you and the enlightened men.
Patanjali has said that faith will find a way, that there will be no arguing then, for or against. Faith is the indication that even though you are fully conscious you are not yet ready, not yet fit for truth; it shows you are still standing in darkness. It means you have accepted what has been said to you as gospel; it means you have

not begun to discuss, to reason things out, to raise questions. And if you do start to reason and to question, the real meaning of what has been said to you will be lost. Whatever interpretation you give it will be your own, and not that of the master. Faith has only one meaning. Faith is a device to bridge the gap between master and disciple.

You are simply to hear what the master says and accept it immediately. You are not to engage in any inner discussion. Just see that he is giving you an indication and begin your journey. Do not hesitate even for a moment. Do not even stop to think, "Where am I going? Why am I going?" Do not consult your mind at all; just give your mind a holiday. Faith means giving your mind a holiday. Ask your mind just to keep its place, just to be quiet. Tell it, "Let me hear this directly. Don't get in my way. Don't interfere. Don't bring your interpretation in. It is not needed. If it is needed, I will consult you. Do not interfere. Do not offer advice for which you have not been asked."
The mind will try to butt in, that is for certain -- that is its habit. No matter what you undertake, it will say, "This is the right thing to do," or it will say, "That is the wrong thing to do." It will say, "I am telling you this for your own good, for your own safety." Such behavior by the mind may be acceptable in worldly affairs, but in moving beyond the world, in moving into spiritual realms, it is a hindrance. How can it be trusted in areas about which it knows nothing at all, or in things it has never tasted? In the beginning the mind will tell you not to trust; it will say you shouldn't trust because this kind of thing has never happened before. And from one standpoint it is right -- you really have never experienced this kind of thing before.

Your mind is nothing but a storehouse of things that have happened to you in the past. It is the sum total of all that you have experienced up to now. So, immediately, the mind will tell you that this kind of thing has never happened before, that there is no such taste. It will tell you this man is deceiving you, that this man is trying to ensnare you. It will say, "This kind of thing never happens. It is illogical, irrational. Don't listen to this man. Be careful. Run from him, from these things he is suggesting." The mind is telling you these things for your protection. And it is not wrong. Whatever it has known or experienced does not include this taste. It has no knowledge whatsoever of this taste. Then what is to be done?
If you follow the advice of the mind then the doors of the unknown will remain closed to you, then what you have not known will remain unknown forever. The mind is only in favor of what it has known. The mind knows the desire of sex, it knows the taste of sex, but it has no idea at all what BRAHMACHARYA is, what celibacy is. So if anyone speaks about brahmacharya, the mind will consider it sheer nonsense. The mind has never known what celibacy is. The mind only knows the downward flow of energy, the flowing into sex. The mind only knows the momentary bliss that comes from the downward flow of the life-force. It has never known the upward flow; it does not know it can rise upward.

And so the mind will argue. The mind will say it never really flows upward at all; it will ask how something that has never happened before can possibly happen. "If it could happen," the mind will say, "then it would have happened already."
Your mind will tell you that everything has already happened, that everything is

already over -- but the master says everything still remains to be accomplished, that what has happened so far is practically nothing, is as good as nought. You are now a seed; you are not yet a tree. And yet your mind will tell you that you are already a tree. It tells you that whatever fruit the tree will bear has already been borne; it tells you that whatever the tree can produce has already been produced. It says that all the possibilities are now over, that all is now fulfilled.
That is why the mind is so troublesome; that is why it is so bored. It says that whatever you wanted to taste you have already tasted, that all is repetitious now. It says you have already enjoyed whatever you wanted to enjoy and that now you are only repeating the same thing over and over again. The mind knows perfectly well it moves in circles, that it repeats the same things continuously, but it does not know that this whole existence, this whole universe is much bigger than it is. The unknown is infinitely greater than the known.
The master keeps on telling you that whatever has happened so far is not even the beginning, that you are still standing outside your real home, that you have not even begun to mount the stairs, that your admission to the palace that is your real home is still very far off.

The question now is how to solve this puzzle. If you listen to what your mind says you cannot listen to what the master says. If you wish to listen to what the master says you will have to get rid of your mind. That is why Patanjali stressed the importance of faith; this is why he considered it the first step. All the enlightened men regard faith in the same way.
Why was faith made the first step? The reason faith was made the first step is indicated by Kabir when he says:

KNOWLEDGE OF INNER EXPERIENCE
MANY COME ASKING FOR.
STRUCK DUMB SAVORING THE SWEET,
WHOSE MOUTH WILL TELL THE TASTE?

Next, Kabir says:
THE SIGNS OF THE DUMB
ONLY THE DUMB UNDERSTAND.
LIKEWISE, THE JOY OF A SAGE
ONLY A SAGE KNOWS.

There is no word in our language to express that ecstasy, not even to indicate it. Your language is your language -- it is the result of your experience -- but the enlightened man has no language; all of his experience comes from silence, from emptiness, from total peace. His experience does not come from thoughts, it comes from the absence of thoughts.
Whatsoever the enlightened man knows is known in emptiness, is known where there are no words at all. What you will come to know in emptiness you will not be able to express in words either.

That which is born out of emptiness can only be experienced in emptiness; only the dumb will be able to communicate with the dumb. But for the dumb, there is no need to tell each other anything.

Buddha and Mahavir often used to stay in the same village at the same time. Once they even stayed in the same inn. Yet no meeting took place between them. There was no need for it. But for the Jains and the Buddhists this has remained a problem. And they keep on discussing it. "Why did they not meet with each other?" they ask. "They both seem quite egotistical," they say. "When they were both in the same inn they should certainly have met. Who knows what beauty might have flowered out of that meeting?"
I tell you there was no need for them to meet at all. Both had tasted the sweet and both were dumb. What would have been the point of exchanging mere signals? If one of them had made a gesture he would have been considered a fool. If either of them had tried to speak he would have been in error; he would have shown he was unable to see that the other had also arrived. So the meeting did not occur, simply because there was no need for it.
There are three kinds of meetings. The first kind is between two ignorant men, between two unenlightened men. When they meet there is great discussion between them. There is talk and talk and more talk, and no good whatsoever comes of it.

It is mere prattle, going on for hours.
The second kind of meeting is between two enlightened men. There is no discussion; complete silence prevails. Emptiness flows between them. It is as if the two are standing on separate banks of a river and the river of emptiness is flowing between them. There is no noise, no talking, no sound.
The third kind of meeting is between the enlightened man and the unenlightened one. When two unenlightened persons meet there is discussion, but it has no substance to it at all. When two enlightened beings meet there is substance, but there is no discussion. And what usually happens in the third case, in the meeting between the enlightened and the unenlightened, is that the unenlightened man talks and talks and talks while the enlightened man just keeps silent and listens.
Many people come to me. They come to ask some question, to seek some solution, but they soon forget that they have come for some reason and begin to give me all sorts of information about themselves. And when they take leave of me they say, "We are so very pleased we came. You spoke of such nice things."
There was once a saint called Balsen. One day a very loquacious man came to see him. He talked so much nonsense, and such a lot of it, that Balsen grew fed up and began to wonder how he could get rid of him. The man talked non-stop; he didn't even give Balsen a chance to say, "Enough, brother! Now I have other work to do."

After quite some time the man began to tell Balsen how he had gone to another village to meet such and such a saint. "We spoke of you," the man said, "and he told me a great deal about you."
This was the chance Balsen had been waiting for. He immediately shouted, "This is totally untrue, completely false!"
The man was quite surprised. He said, "I have not yet repeated what the saint said about you, and you tell me it is totally false?"
Balsen replied, "Certainly I say it is false. You probably didn't even give him a chance to open his mouth! So how could he say anything about me? From my own experience with you I can clearly see he never had a chance to say a word!"
The third kind of meeting is like this -- the unenlightened man goes on talking and

talking and the enlightened man listens. This is what happens in most cases. The enlightened man listens out of compassion. He thinks it may lighten your load if you can give vent to your feelings and to your thoughts; he feels you may obtain a little relief from your cares and tribulations. This talking is a kind of catharsis. And so he listens.
In the West the practice of listening has turned into a business, a very flourishing business based on the idea that talking about one's problems is a kind of catharsis. These days a psychoanalyst has the most profitable business. It has become very expensive, and all the psychoanalyst does is listen.

For ignorant people the discoveries of Freud have been a great boon, a great comfort. In the psychoanalytical treatment Freud developed for mentally ill people, the patient is asked to lie down on a couch and the psychoanalyst sits behind the couch and says, "Say whatsoever you want to. Just speak aloud whatever thoughts come into your mind. Don't worry at all whether they are relevant or irrelevant, whether they are good or bad, meaningful or meaningless. Just let the thoughts come; just give voice to them." Sometimes this treatment can go on for three years; it all depends on the condition of the patient. And the whole treatment costs a great deal of money. The time of treatment varies -- it may be one hour a day; it may be two to three times a week -- and the psychoanalyst simply listens. After prattling on like this for three years or so many people eventually become calm and quiet.
The psychoanalyst is a professional listener. He does nothing; he simply listens. You have undoubtedly encountered professional speakers; this man is a professional listener. Even when Freud grew old he worked eight to ten hours a day, listening to the jabber of eight to ten people every day. One of his newer pupils once asked him, "Don't you get fed up? Don't you feel exhausted after listening to two or three patients? I get so tired of it sometimes I feel I'll just die. But you are wonderful.

You go on listening from morning until night." "Don't be a fool!" Freud replied. "Who listens? The patient keeps on talking -- that's fine, let him speak -- but who listens? If you did listen you would wear yourself out!"
In the West psychoanalysis has become a very thriving business, growing day by day. And there is a reason for it. These days people do not have enough leisure to spend time in conversation, in chit-chat. Who listens any more? The wife does not listen to the husband and the husband does not listen to the wife. There is no leisure; there is no free time, and so people need a professional listener to hear their problems, to afford them some relief, to lighten their loads.
The enlightened man will listen to the unenlightened man, but he only does so to bring you some relief. The opposite should happen. The unenlightened man should listen to the enlightened man. But this can only happen when there is faith between the two; otherwise, the unenlightened man will always mistrust what the enlightened man is saying. No matter what he says, it will create suspicion in the unenlightened man's mind. His mind will protest. It will say, "This cannot be! It is impossible! Why should I move towards the unknown? Why should I waste my energy? Why should I pay any attention to him?" To be able to set the mind aside you need faith.
The mind will not allow you to move into the experience of the unknown.

It will stop you at the shore; it will not allow you to plunge into the ocean. It will ask, "Where is the other shore? What guarantee is there the boat will take me to the other shore? That other shore is not even visible. That other shore is just a possibility; it is not a fact. Has anyone ever reached there? Why do I even want to bother? Those who are supposed to have gone to the other shore have not even returned to say they have arrived! And this one I am supposed to follow, has he a map to show me the way? Is there any real basis to all his talk about this unknown? Has he any real proof?"
No, the master cannot give you any proof. There is no proof. The experience itself is the proof. But when you have deep faith in your heart you can enter into his experience. Your faith must be so strong that you can bridge the distance between you and him, so strong that you begin to obtain not only direct proof but direct sensual perception of his experience as well, so strong that you can also hear the sound of the harmony that rings continuously within him, so strong that you also have an inkling of the taste that fills his mouth, so strong that what has happened to him touches you too, so strong that the darkness within you is shattered by a brilliant flash of lightning and you see for a moment who you are. For this phenomenon to occur you must give yourself the opportunity.

And that opportunity will be given to you by your faith.

STRUCK DUMB SAVORING THE SWEET,
WHOSE MOUTH WILL TELL THE TASTE?

THE SIGNS OF THE DUMB
ONLY THE DUMB UNDERSTAND.
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ONLY A SAGE KNOWS.

Remember this and remember it well: if you do not approve of a master, of a guru, of a sage, or a saint, leave him at once -- but do not make up your mind that he is false, that he is a fake. How can you decide? If you do not approve of him, then just leave him quietly, just say to yourself that his is not the path for you. But do not pronounce judgment on him. Many people turned away from Buddha and declared that he was a fake. Many did the same to Jesus and played their part in placing him on the cross. So don't set yourself up as being so very intelligent. All of these people were intelligent men; they were just like you -- and see what happened! They said Buddha was a fake, that what he said was not to be trusted -- and they were just as intelligent as you. They had the same minds; they put forth the same arguments as you. They had the same experiences of the world as you do. How could they believe what someone like Buddha said? They had no experience of the world beyond, the other shore was not visible to them. And Buddha was speaking of that other shore.
That other shore is not only unknown, it is also unknowable.

Even after knowing it, it cannot be known completely. You have to keep on trying to know it, to keep on trying more and more, and still your knowledge will remain incomplete. Its totality is such that it is always expanding. There is no contradiction in speaking of its totality or of its non-totality. What Buddha was saying was beyond intellect, so may people did not believe what he said. Many

people rejected him. But because of their disbelief Buddha loses nothing; on the contrary, it is the disbelievers who miss, who fail to realize the truth. Remember, no one loses anything because of your doubt, because of your disbelief. You are the only loser. And you are the loser because you are hindering your own progress.

So when you feel someone is not completely right for you, do not make any decision about him -- just leave him quietly and seek out someone else. What is the problem? There are two alternatives open to you. You can either say, "I am leaving this man because he is wrong," or you can say, "I am leaving this man because his path is not for me." There is a difference between these two statements.
You have come to me. If you feel that what I have to say does not suit you, that you do not approve of what I say, then leave me quietly. Why? Then you will seek out someone whose views suit you better. But if you decide that I am false then your mind will harden, and when you go to the second man you will also decide that he is false.

And when you go to the third man you will come to the same decision as well. Eventually this decision you have taken will be like a weight on your mind, and then wheresoever you go it will be an impediment on your path, it will hinder your progress; it will always cause you to find fault with others. And then you will never be able to recognize an enlightened man.
Kabir says:

... THE JOY OF A SAGE
ONLY A SAGE KNOWS.

There is no other way to know Buddha but to become a buddha yourself. To know Krishna, to understand him, you will have to become like Krishna yourself. Nothing less will do. But we decide things in such a hurry. You are drowning in the valley of darkness and yet you reach monumental decisions about the peaks, about places your vision is not even able to reach -- not to mention making up your mind about the journey itself. You make up your minds about things you have not even glimpsed.
There is a reason you make such decisions. The mind decides every master is false because the mind does not want to go anywhere at all. So with this kind of attitude you are definitely going to remain in the dark valley. If you find an authentic master the mind will have to begin its uphill journey, and that it does not want to do, the uphill journey seems painful and arduous. The mind loves to be idle; it loves inertia.

It says, "Stay in bed. There is no need to go anywhere today."
The valley is all there is for you. Earning money, having children, seeing your name in the newspaper on and off, having one or two hundred people attend your funeral -- all this is enough for you. Then you can say you are a successful man. What success!
The most amazing thing is that you do not believe the enlightened man! You doubt him -- yet you never have doubts whatsoever about this mind that makes you so mean and selfish. You never ask your mind, "Is earning money, siring half a dozen children, achieving fame, enough? Is this all? Is this the goal of life? Is this real

achievement?" But this is what your mind keeps telling you. When you kneel to pray it reminds you of your shop. It tells you how much you could have earned this hour you are spending praying. It rushes you through your worship, but when it leads you to the house of a prostitute it wishes the night could have been longer. And you never entertain the slightest doubt about your mind?
If you want to doubt anything, doubt your mind! But you do not doubt it at all! You have become so identified with it you have forgotten you are not the mind, you have forgotten you are separate from the mind. You are identified with it; you think it is you. You raise doubts about the enlightened man because to be associated with him you will have to begin an uphill journey, you will have to work hard, you will have to repent.

You will be transformed; you will no longer be what you are -- and so you find all sorts of excuses not to follow the men who have become enlightened.

NOT OF WRITTEN WORDS
BUT OF EXPERIENCING:
WHEN THE BRIDE MEETS HIS EMBRACE
THE GUESTS ALL FADE AWAY.

Where can you find greater words than these!
Truth is not something that can be reduced to written form; it is not to be found in books and scriptures. Truth is unfathomable. You will not be able to find it anywhere. You may read the Vedas; you can memorize them, but, as Kabir says, you will not be able to find the truth. Truth is not something that can be reduced to paper. Truth has to be seen, to be experienced.
Look at it this way -- suppose a blind man were to memorize everything that has ever been written about light; suppose a blind man were to master the whole theory of light, would all his knowledge create a single ray of light? Would it afford him the tiniest glimpse of light? Would it light even a few steps in front of him? There is no way it can happen. Truth has to be seen, to be experienced. One's eyes must be wide open.
And the eyes with which you view the outside world are not the eyes I mean. There are eyes that see within as well. Keep this subtle and deep discovery of yoga in mind -- there are as many inner faculties as there are outer ones.

It has to be so. A river cannot have just one bank; there must be two. It does not matter whether the second bank can be seen or not. You see the outside world with your eyes, but they have another side, another bank, so that you can see within as well. You hear the sounds of the outer world with your ears, but there are ears for inner hearing too. You touch things with your hands and know them in this way, but on the inside there is also a capacity of touch to allow you your own inner experiences. It would make no sense if we were able to experience all these things on the outside and yet were unable to experience our own selves. It would make no sense if we were able to see everything but our own selves, if we were able to hear the hustle and bustle of the whole world and yet were unable to hear our own inner music.
No, yoga says, the sense-organs are of two aspects. One aspect is gross, belonging to the body, moving towards the outer world; the second is subtle, moving within. And about these organs of sense there is no written science for you to read, for

you to master.
The Vedas, the Koran and the Bible all belong to the outer world. There is no inner scripture. There is only the soul. Only you are within. And that is the scripture.
Kabir says, this phenomenon of seeing the inner scripture is one of experiencing. It happens when you stand in front of your self, when you know your self, when you see your self in such a total way that nothing more remains to be seen.

NOT OF WRITTEN WORDS
BUT OF EXPERIENCING:

You have already wasted enough time on written words. You have read enough scriptures; you have amassed enough information. What is left to read? You have been wandering in this jungle of words from birth to birth and still you have not awakened.
Words are like the dry leaves the trees discard. These words have come down to us from the enlightened men, from those in whom the fresh green leaves of experience have sprouted, but they have dried and fallen. And you just sit there, collecting them at your leisure. The nights are cold. Burn them. Warm yourselves with them. Their warmth will make you feel good. The man who learns the art of burning words will also be able to learn the art of diving deeply into experience.

NOT OF WRITTEN WORDS
BUT OF EXPERIENCING:

There is a wonderful story about the Zen monk Lin Chi. He was sitting under a tree when he became enlightened. He immediately ran into his room and brought out all the scriptures of Buddha, the Tripitaka and others, and set fire to them. A crowd soon collected. People thought he had gone mad, that he had gone insane. They could not imagine a greater sin than reducing the priceless words of the Buddha to ashes! And all the time Lin Chi was laughing loudly. Some of the people tried to extinguish the fire so something might be saved, but Lin Chi laughed and said, "Fools! There is no need to save anything! There is nothing there worth saving!"
Later, people asked him, "Had you taken leave of your senses? You threw such priceless literature away!"
He replied, "I realized today there is nothing substantial in the scriptures whatsoever."

If Lin Chi had heard the words of Kabir in those days, he would have agreed with him; he would have said, "Truth cannot be obtained from the scriptures. It is a matter of self-experience." What he did say was, "I have reduced the scriptures to ashes so you may learn from my action, so you may remain aware."
It is not that there is nothing at all in the scriptures, that there is no substance in them -- they are the words of those who have seen, of those who have experienced. But their experience is their own; it cannot be conveyed through words. Words cannot express that experience fully; words cannot express that experience totally. Words are like used cartridges, and you are collecting them now that they are of no use. To reach truth you must be free of words, and by

becoming free of words you become free of the mind. Becoming free of the mind is taking the first step towards the authentic experience.

WHEN THE BRIDE MEETS HIS EMBRACE
THE GUESTS ALL FADE AWAY.

This is a very beautiful statement. When the bridegroom sets out for the house of the bride he is accompanied by a wedding-party. There is much carry-on, much merriment; a band plays all along the way. The procession of the bridegroom to the house of the bride is considered an important event and guests are especially invited to join it. This procession is composed of all the bridegroom's relatives and friends.

Later the bride and bridegroom meet; they sit together and the marriage is solemnized. And as soon as the ceremony is over the procession is the first thing to be forgotten. Then the bridegroom is quite indifferent to his guests. So long as the bride and the bridegroom were as yet unmarried the wedding procession was important, but now THE GUESTS ALL FADE AWAY.
Kabir is saying that words and scriptures are like the members of a wedding procession. As soon as the marriage has been solemnized the procession ceases to be of any significance. Of what use are the Vedas then? None. When the real thing has been achieved all the scriptures become useless. They were fine before, but then you had not yet reached the door of the bride. If the scriptures can lead you to the door of the bride it is enough; if they fulfill the function of the wedding procession it is more than enough. What bridegroom will care about the procession when he has been given to his bride? Then the guests are unimportant; then the whole affair is over. Who cares about the river or the boat after one has reached the other shore? Who remembers the bridge after it has been crossed? Who keeps carrying a ladder after one has climbed to the top?

WHEN THE BRIDE MEETS HIS EMBRACE
THE GUESTS ALL FADE AWAY.

Then Kabir says:
THAT WHICH SEES CANNOT SPEAK,
WHICH SPEAKS CANNOT HEAR,
THAT WHICH HEARS CANNOT EXPLAIN.

WHY TONGUE, EYES, EARS?

Both the anatomist and the psychologist will have to agree with what Kabir says here. Modern science will support him. Kabir says that the eyes do the work of seeing but cannot speak, that the tongue does the work of speaking but cannot hear, that the ears do the work of hearing but cannot explain anything. Then how, he asks, are all these organs united -- the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue? Each of the sense organs does its own work, but there must be an inner center where they all meet -- otherwise this functioning would not be possible. For example, I am speaking now. You are listening to me with your ears and you are seeing me with your eyes, and somewhere within you it all meets and you know

that the person you are seeing is also the one who is speaking.
The eyes and the ears relay their experience to some inner center. And there they meet. They meet in the consciousness, in the self hidden within the organs. Eyes see, ears hear, noses smell, hands touch -- all the organs gather their own experiences. And they are assembled in the self; they are brought together as if servants were to carry things from all over the house and lay them at the feet of the master.
The sense organs cannot do anything on their own. A bird may be singing but, the moment it flies away, although the eyes are quite healthy they can no longer see it, although the ears are fine they cannot hear it, and the tongue cannot speak of it because it has gone.

The thing that united them has flown away; the bridge that united all the separate functions is gone. It is like the thread of a MALA. The thread passes through the beads and links them together. Although it is invisible, it is the support. As soon as the thread breaks, the beads scatter. The sense organs are like the beads and the self is like the thread. The self supports the senses; it maintains them.
You are following the servants. You have no idea who the master is at all. You follow whatever the eyes say immediately. If your eyes tell you a certain woman is beautiful you begin to chase after her right away. If your ears tell you a certain piece of music is sweet you immediately stop to listen to it. You follow the dictates of your sense organs without realizing nothing is more helpless than they are. They are absolutely helpless. They only function because of another entity. Their existence depends on another entity; their energy is dependent on another. Someone else, hidden within you, is in the driver's seat. This entity is not visible; it is as invisible as the thread of your MALA. The beads are visible, but as soon as the life force within takes its leave they will be scattered.

THAT WHICH SEES CANNOT SPEAK,
WHICH SPEAKS CANNOT HEAR,
THAT WHICH HEARS CANNOT EXPLAIN.
WHY TONGUE, EYES, EARS?

Of what use are the eyes, the ears, the nose? How are they useful? Why do you put so much importance on them? Be mindful of him in whose service they are employed.

Seek the master of the house. Seek the self.

WHAT'S FULL EMPTIES OUT;
WHAT'S EMPTY FILLS UP.
EMPTY, FULL -- NEITHER TO BE FOUND.
THE EXPERIENCE IS THIS.

Such a definition of experience is rare. Very great and very wise men have tried to define experience, have tried to tell us what experience is, but they have not been too successful. Kabir has been quite successful indeed. Let us try to understand him, let us go deeply into Kabir's definition.
Life consists of opposites. Day follows night, birth follows death, happiness follows misery, prosperity follows adversity and health follows illness. Each of these things

is changing continuously, always moving from one pole to the other. Right now you are perfectly hale and hearty, but in a moment you can suddenly become ill. When you are healthy you cannot conceive that you can be taken ill suddenly, and when you are ill you are sure you will never be healthy again. One moment you are happy and in a good mood, and the next moment you are sad. When you are happy you think how successful you are and you feel that sadness will never come; when you are overcome with sadness you wonder if you'll ever be happy or in a good mood again and you think the sadness will never go away. But if you think about it, if you look back, if you analyze what has happened in your life you will be able to see that every state is eventually transformed into its opposite.

Neither happiness nor misery lasts for long; one state is continuously giving way to another. If you understand this clearly you will not be disturbed when misery overtakes you, because you know that in a little while things will change. Nor will you become so excited when you are happy that you will forget everything else and view happiness as a permanent feature of your life. You will know that in a short while everything will change again. Kabir expresses this phenomenon in these words:

WHAT'S FULL EMPTIES OUT;
WHAT'S EMPTY FILLS UP.

There is no escaping this. It is an eternal law of life. One who is young will grow old, and one who lives will die. One who has achieved will lose, and one who has attained success will become a failure. One who has reached the top will topple into the valley.

WHAT'S FULL EMPTIES OUT;
WHAT'S EMPTY FILLS UP.

Mountains crumble and lakes are formed. Lakes fill up and mountains rise out of them. This phenomenon happens continuously.

EMPTY, FULL -- NEITHER TO BE FOUND.
THE EXPERIENCE IS THIS.

So you must try to reach to a state where you are neither empty nor full. Then and only then will there be liberation, freedom, moksha, the ultimate ecstasy. Then there will be no distinctions whatsoever.

THE EXPERIENCE IS THIS.

Can you find a state within yourself where you cannot say you are empty and you cannot say you are full, where you cannot say you are miserable and you cannot say you are happy, where you cannot say you are quiet and you cannot say you are restless, where you cannot say you are alive and you cannot say you are dead? Exactly in the middle lies transcendence. One who has attained to the middle of

two extremes, who remains unperturbed in the midst of opposites, has achieved what Kabir calls THE EXPERIENCE. This is the experience of the self. All other experiences are experiences of the mind.
The mind exists in duality. The mind vacillates from one pole to the opposite, from one extreme to the other. The mind is either happy or unhappy, pleased or displeased, in defeat or victorious. It never stops in the middle. It swings from one extreme to the other like the pendulum of a clock.
But when the pendulum stops in the middle the clock stops working, so when you can remain in the middle, the clock of the mind will stop working as well. From that moment on time will no longer exist for you. From that day on there will be no more birth or death for you; then you are liberated. Remaining in the middle is liberation. In the middle there is no change; nothing is opposite to the middle. This is why Buddha called his path "the middle way." When you are in the middle you have achieved all.

Kabir's way of saying this is quite unique. It is virtually impossible to find a style such as his anywhere else.
To explain truth even the enlightened ones had to choose one extreme or another. The Vedas say, "Be filled with the whole. Be so full that you cannot be empty at all," and Buddha says, "Be empty. Be void. Be so empty of ego that not a single grain remains within you." Buddha indicates truth through his doctrine of emptiness and the Vedas indicate the same truth through the principle of fullness -- but both are saying the same thing.
Buddha says to be free from the ego, be empty, and so his doctrine is known as SHOONYAVAD, as the path of emptiness, of no-self. His stress is laid on emptiness. He uses words like `void' and `negation' to indicate freedom from the ego. Buddha does not say that you will become one with God, that you will be filled with God or that God will fill you, he says it will happen of its own accord. He says not to worry about it; he just says to free yourself of the ego. On the other hand, when the Vedas, the Vedant and Shankar speak of this point they say, "Be filled with God. Do not worry about being empty. When you are completely full your ego will automatically be discarded. When you are filled with God there will no longer be any room left for the ego."
But Kabir is incomparable. Kabir is unique. He is more successful than Buddha and the Vedas in defining what the experience is.

He has defined it with more precision and with more skill than the Vedant and Buddha have done.
He says:
SUCH A WONDER! IT'S NEVER TOLD.
TELL, AND STILL IT'S HIDDEN.

Kabir has realized himself how wonderful this phenomenon is, how unique it is; he has realized it can never be defined, that it can never be put into words. He says it is so wonderful he is keeping it a secret; he says he will only speak of it if he can find a man who is worthy.

KORAN AND VEDA COULDN'T WRITE IT.
IF I SAY IT, WHO WILL LISTEN?

Kabir says people might possibly believe it if it were written in the Vedas or in the Koran. But the truth is not recorded in either of these scriptures.

SUCH A WONDER! IT'S NEVER TOLD.
TELL, AND STILL IT'S HIDDEN.
KORAN AND VEDA COULDN'T WRITE IT.
IF I SAY IT, WHO WILL LISTEN?

Kabir says he wants to share this wonderful thing; it is in his mind to tell people about it, but he keeps it a secret. "Whom should I tell?" he asks. "Who will believe it? Who will have faith in it? It is not written in the Vedas or in the Koran. If it were written in the Vedas at least the Hindus might believe it; if it were written in the Koran then Moslems might believe it. But Kabir knows full well no one will believe him.
The truth is that neither a Hindu nor a Moslem will believe anything that has to do with authentic religion.

Only a man who is neither Hindu nor Moslem, neither Jaina nor Christian, neither Parsi nor Sikh, will believe something that is in the realm of pure religion, will believe something that does not relate to a specific sect, to a particular religious denomination. Religion has no denomination. No adjective can precede religion. Each sect has a different name, and each sect emphasizes one particular aspect of religion. One sect will stress fullness for example, while another will lay importance on emptiness. Kabir says not to emphasize either of the two -- to seek the middle and to remain there, steadfast and firm.
Such a place exists, but how are you going to seek it?
When you are miserable just sit quietly and observe your misery. Don't try to do anything to erase it. Don't fight against it, just let it come. Just let the tears flow; just let the heart weep. Just sit by yourself and keep watching everything that is happening, don't make any effort whatsoever to rid yourself of your misery. If you try to get rid of it, it means you are wishing for happiness.
If you think of misery as emptiness then fullness will represent happiness for you. And when happiness does come to you, just sit quietly and observe it as well. Don't try to cling to it either. Don't try to hold on to it; don't try to make it last. Simply watch it. Be completely indifferent to it. If it comes, let it come; if it takes its leave of you, then let it go.

When you make an effort to cling to happiness, when you try to hold on to it, because of the very act of trying your misery will be as great as the effort you spend trying to hold on to your happiness. They are linked together. If you have a greater partiality for one, it will immediately be replaced by the other.
Have you ever watched a tightrope walker? The whole secret of life is hidden there. To maintain his balance the tightrope walker holds a bamboo pole in his hand. There is potential danger in every step. If he leans a little to the left he may fall, so he leans his bamboo pole a little to the right and thus maintains his balance. And still he is in danger, because the maintenance of balance is not a static phenomenon. Balance must be maintained every moment; it must be readjusted at every step. Suppose that now he leans to the right -- there is a possibility he may fall to the right so he has to lean his pole to the left. He keeps

balancing from left to right and from right to left so that he won't fall. And so he keeps himself in the middle and is able to walk his tightrope. Happiness and misery are like right and left to the tightrope walker.
Just be still within. Just sit quietly, turning neither to the left nor to the right. Just be a witness; just keep on observing. If misery comes, just recognize it. Don't form any judgment as to whether it is good or bad, as to whether it should have come to you or should not have come to you -- just be aware that misery is present, just experience it.

And do not try to create happiness either, otherwise you will tilt to the other side. If happiness comes, don't try to cling to it or you will lean to the other side again, back towards misery.
If you just keep on watching, just keep on observing both happiness and misery, all of a sudden you will find one day that you are separate, that you are quite apart, quite aloof from both. Suddenly you will come to know that both things are only happening around you and that you are beyond them both. This beyondness is the universal soul.
This phenomenon of beyondness, this observing of both and yet not belonging to either, is the moment when you are neither empty nor full. You are neither empty nor full because now you realize you are neither happiness nor misery. Kabir says, this is real knowledge.

SUCH WONDER! IT'S NEVER TOLD.
TELL, AND STILL IT'S HIDDEN.
KORAN AND VEDA COULDN'T WRITE IT.
IF I SAY IT, WHO WILL LISTEN?

THE END.